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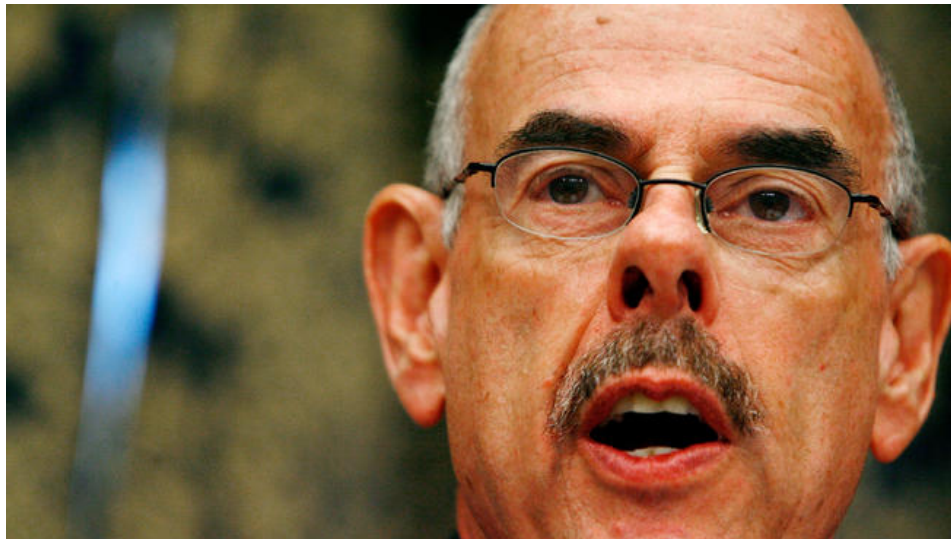

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Longtime Congressman Henry Waxman to Retire

Waxman's announcement means California will be losing two of its most senior members in the House

By Jonathan Lloyd | Thursday, Jan 30, 2014 | Updated 10:22 PMPDT

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U.S. Representative for California's 30th congressional district



Rep. Henry Waxman announced Thursday that he will not seek re-election after 40 years in office.

Waxman made the announcement in a statement issued Thursday morning. Waxman, whose first campaign was in 1974, said he plans to retire at the end of 2014.

"As I reflect on my career, I am filled with gratitude," the Democrat said in the statement. "I am grateful for the support of my constituents, who have entrusted me to represent them and encouraged me

to become a leader on national and international

issues.

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"I am grateful for my supporters and allies, who have worked side-by-side with me to fight for issues we care about: health, environmental protection, women's and gay rights, and strengthening the ties between the United States and our most important ally, the State of Israel."

Waxman represents California's newly drawn 33rd Congressional District, which includes western Los Angeles, West Hollywood, Santa Monica and Beverly Hills. He also served six years in the California State Assembly.

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Waxman went on to list what he does not like about the political climate in Congress, adding that his decision to leave was not out of frustration.

"I abhor the extremism of the Tea Party Republicans," Waxman said. "I am embarrassed that the greatest legislative body in the world too often operates in a partisan intellectual vacuum, denying science, refusing to listen to experts, and ignoring facts."

"The reason for my decision is simple. After 40 years in Congress, it's time for someone else to have the chance to make his or her mark, ideally someone who is young enough to make the long-term commitment that's required for real legislative success. I still feel youthful and energetic, but I recognize if I want to experience a life outside of Congress, I need to start soon. Public office is not the only way to serve, and I want to explore other avenues while I still can."

Waxman pushed for investigations into the tobacco industry and was instrumental in getting President Barack Obama's health care overhaul completed.

His upcoming departure and that of [Congressman George Miller](#), who represents Contra Costa County, will leave California without two of its [most senior members](#). Both men took office in January 1975.

Wendy Greuel, former Los Angeles city controller, told KPCC radio on Thursday that she would run for Waxman's seat.

Another possible contender is Sandra Fluke, the former Georgetown University law student who testified to congressional Democrats that she wanted her college health plan to cover her birth control. Radio personality Rush Limbaugh branded her a "slut," but later apologized.

On Thursday Fluke said she was "strongly considering running" for the seat.

Democratic state Sen. Ted Lieu said on his Facebook page he was "seriously looking at running" and would make an announcement Friday.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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